



Chapter 25

Program Supervision

1. Why is supervision⁵³ important?

The objective of the MAP approach is to scale up existing programs and build capacity to empower stakeholders from the village to the national level, in every sector, and in the public sector as well as civil society to join the war against the epidemic. Countries have a responsibility to supervise the implementation of MAP programs to ensure that:

- Program activities are carried out as planned;
- Programs that are successful are scaled up further and those that are not are provided with capacity building or halted;
- Funds are spent efficiently, effectively and transparently;
- Both beneficiaries and financing agencies are provided with timely and complete information on the appropriate disposition of funding.

2. What is good supervision?

Good supervision includes the review of the results of monitoring and evaluation, visits to observe development of activities in the field, and discussions with different stakeholders about progress in program implementation and necessary improvements in program plans. There is considerable experience from both the public and private sectors on what are the core elements of good supervision, as suggested in Box 25.1.

Box 25.1: What is Good Supervision?

- Performance can only be judged by a mix of quantitative and qualitative program/ financial/social monitoring that is evaluated with the participation of both stakeholders and independent experts.
- Operational and management performance is assessed realistically based on developments on the ground rather than on hopes and promises.
- Problems are identified quickly and reported candidly, always keeping in mind the program's objectives.
- Program redesign is a normal part of continuous consultations and feedback among key stakeholders, especially implementing and oversight agencies.
- Emerging issues are addressed proactively, incorporating global good practices adapted to country circumstances.
- Fiduciary aspects are monitored closely to ensure compliance with agreed standards.
- In view of the importance of behavior change to win the war against HIV/AIDS, all supervision should emphasize both stakeholder participation and social impact monitoring.

⁵³ This chapter deals with management and operational supervision of HIV/AIDS programs and not the technical supervision of HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support, and mitigation activities which is extensively covered elsewhere.

Program supervision in a MAP country goes on at various levels and use a variety of mechanisms:

- Implementing agencies in the public sector and in civil society are responsible for first-line supervision, especially with regard to the basic fiduciary requirements of: (i) financial management and reporting; (ii) procurement of goods and services; (iii) disbursement of funds to beneficiaries; and (iv) monitoring and initial evaluation of program activities. Supervision arrangements of implementing agencies should be embodied in the funding arrangements between NACs and the agencies;
- The NACs, through their secretariats, are responsible for overall operational and program supervision, a responsibility which may be delegated and/or contracted out, in part or in whole, to specialized agencies. Supervision includes the monitoring of various phases of program activities: (i) financial reporting and oversight of program inputs, often on a monthly basis; (ii) reviews with implementing agencies, often on a monthly basis for trouble shooting and on a quarterly basis to review performance⁵⁴; and (iii) on an annual basis for formal program review with donors and beneficiary agencies and for fund-raising. (It may be appropriate to plan semi-annual reviews at the beginning of a project). The annual reviews are described in box 25.2.

Box 25.2: Annual Program Reviews**Annual reviews by the key internal and external stakeholders can:**

- Review progress towards implementing a country's HIV/AIDS strategic plan;
- Develop an effective mechanism for collaboration and distribution of funding within national goals;
- Assess the performance of MAP activities during the previous 12 months, focusing on improving performance and issues such as equity, coverage and inclusion; and
- Agree on the main priorities and the annual work program for the forth-coming 12 months, including the assurance of sufficient national and international funding
- Reduce the administrative burden on a MAP country of numerous un-coordinated donor supervision throughout the year.

- Donors will also supervise MAP programs to which they provide funding and technical expertise both as part of their fiduciary responsibility and of their development objective of providing the benefits of knowledge management and good practices from around the world.
- NASs need to use a variety of mechanisms to assess implementing agencies both in the public sector and civil society, including field investigations. In Ghana, for example, the central authority has employed field investigators to visit selected beneficiary organizations to verify that NGO's and CBOs, which have received subproject grants are implementing them for the intended purposes.

⁵⁴ Annex 20.1 has a sample NGO progress report from Kenya. Annex 20.2 has a regional progress report from Ethiopia. Annex 20.3 has a progress report at the local level. Annex 20.4 has a community subproject reporting form from Uganda.

Table 25.1

Field Supervision Checklist	
Preparations	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify supervision activities. For example, meetings, field visits, stakeholders consultation etc. 2. Ensure all relevant background documents and reports are available. For example, project document, annual work plan, M&E reports, financial statements, and previous supervision reports. 3. Identify objectives, methodology, type and timing of supervision. 4. Inform the entities/persons⁵⁵ who would be part of the supervision activity and agree on the objectives and supervision dates. 	
Terms of Reference (TOR)	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Clearly spell out the objectives of the supervision including inputs and outputs of the project activities as well as outcomes and impact. 6. Identify if there have been any changes in the grant recipient's commitments since the project inception. 7. Get management's approval and share⁵⁶. 	
Team composition	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Identify team members based on what focus areas would be covered in the supervision. 9. Ensure appropriate continuity of the team. 10. Have subject matter specialist in the teams. 11. Share TOR and the team composition with key stakeholders involved in the supervision. 12. Incorporate their feedback including adjustments in the logistics. 13. Ensure supervision activities and their timings are suitable for all. 	
Conducting supervision	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. All members of the team should review the project documents before conducting the supervision. 15. Follow up on the daily progress with each team member and record issues, findings, recommendations and decisions agreed with the counterparts – constantly strategize the next steps. 16. Conduct meetings with the counterpart team/individuals and stakeholders (including grant beneficiaries) focusing on the issues and implementation bottlenecks. 17. Conduct field visits. Cover at least 1-5 subproject sites if possible. Record beneficiary's views, problems and observations. 18. Convene team meeting with the counterparts and discuss the findings and recommendations (within the existing capacity of implementing agency). 19. Incorporate counterpart's views. 	
Report preparation	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Address issues listed in the TOR and other issues identified during the supervision. 21. Spell out specific suggestions and adequate guidance to the grant recipient of the actions to be taken, by whom and by when. 22. Assess how much the project/subproject has so far achieved its targets set out at the time project started. 23. Get counterpart's observations and suggestions. 24. Conduct a team meeting with the grant recipient team and reach agreements on the report findings, recommendation and achievement targets. 25. Finalize and share the report with the stakeholders. 	

⁵⁵ Entities/persons may include NAC/NAS, MOH, participating line ministries, donors, NGO/CBOs; depending on who would be joining the supervision.

⁵⁶ Share with the head of the project management entity. For example, if the World Bank team is supervising, the Task Team Leader of the Bank should share with the head of the project management unit (or NAS).

3. Lessons learned and recommendations

While it is early to have a large number of definitive lessons about supervision, there are recommendations in several areas.

Supervision responsibility and mechanisms should be built into project design. Agreeing on what should be funded, through which mechanisms, and with what geographic spread assumes that these activities can be supervised to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. Having an appropriate monitoring and evaluation system in place is the essential requirement of supervision.

NACs should contract specialized supervision and delegate certain areas of supervision as appropriate.

NAC/NAS will not want to hire in the extensive skills needed for supervision of most program activities or for the fiduciary elements of all program activities. NAC/NAS should therefore contract specialized agencies for financial management and disbursements, procurement oversight, and most elements of monitoring and evaluation. Epidemic monitoring is almost always delegated to Ministries of Health and other specialized institutions. The NAC/NAS remain responsible for the general oversight of project implementation and the performance of the contracting agents.

Key stakeholders and beneficiaries should be involved in program supervision. While the broad membership of the NACs themselves ensure that many stakeholders will be involved in MAP program oversight, it is often useful to have more specialized stakeholder representatives; although not always easier to implement, this may be achieved by the creation of a civil society oversight body with a small but distinct budget and staff.

Annual reviews are essential means of involving all stakeholders in performance review and budget preparation and funding⁵⁷. These reviews are best done on the basis of a preparation mission that puts together reports for consideration by stakeholders and decision-makers. Quarterly reviews can be done as needed on specific topics.

External Partners can play an important role in program supervision, especially in bringing in examples of good practices from around the world.

The role of technical resource networks, the UN AIDS Theme Group, and of individual donors is discussed in the chapter on external partners. However, evidence so far, mostly from the World Bank, suggests that donors may substantially underestimate the supervision required to fulfill their fiduciary requirements and the quality enhancement that may result from more intensive interaction and provision of international good practices. The specific recommendations on Bank supervision coming out of the joint UNAIDS/World Bank progress reviews of the MAP and of the Bank's performance include:

- Supervision strategies should be prepared by Bank team teams as part of project preparation that provide a similar level of support during supervision as during project preparation;
- The complexity of MAP programs need larger Bank supervision teams covering more fiduciary and thematic areas than usual, requiring more than twice the average level of Bank administrative budget resources;
- The senior Bank official in country should be responsible for the Bank's contribution to external partnership;

⁵⁷ Annual reviews can be supplemental to quarterly reviews on more urgent operational issues and on special topics and on the regular supervision of implementing agency performance

- While day-to-day supervision assistance may be helpful, the strategic focus and overall review of formal supervision missions is essential, especially to enhance international good practice;
- Joint supervision missions among external partners, especially through the joint annual reviews, promote coordination and collaboration while reducing the burden on MAP countries of multiple, uncoordinated donor missions.



